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Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean

Summary record of the 450th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 8 July 2003, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Mahendran ..... (Sri Lanka)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

1. **The Chairman** drew the attention of the members of the Ad Hoc Committee to the provisional agenda for the session contained in document A/AC.159/L.133. If there were no objections, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt it.

2. *The agenda was adopted.*

Election of other officers

3. **The Chairman** said that he had received a communication from the delegation of Mozambique nominating Ambassador Chidumo as Vice-Chairman. If he heard no objections, he would take it that the Committee wished to elect Ambassador Chidumo as Vice-Chairman by acclamation.

4. **Mr. Chidumo** (Mozambique) was elected Vice-Chairman by acclamation.

Report of the Chairman of the Committee pursuant to paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 56/16 of 29 November 2001

5. **The Chairman** said that, in its resolution of 56/17 of 29 November 2001, the General Assembly had requested him to continue his informal consultations with the members of the Committee and to report, through the Committee, to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session.

6. Since the adoption of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, the situation in the world, particularly in the Indian Ocean, had undergone major changes, including the end of the super-Power rivalry in the context of the Cold War, which had posed a threat to the peace and security of the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean.

7. Despite the difficulties faced by the Committee in reaching an agreement on the manner of implementation of the Declaration, its objectives still remained valid. Most importantly, the Declaration sought to preserve the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the States of the Indian Ocean region and to resolve their political, economic and social problems under conditions of peace and tranquillity.

8. The General Assembly had emphasized the importance of participation by all permanent members of the Security Council and the major maritime users of the Indian Ocean in the work of the Committee, which would facilitate the development of a mutually beneficial dialogue to promote peace and security in the Indian Ocean region.

9. During the current year, as in previous years, he had once again held consultations with the three permanent members of the Security Council, France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, who had, regrettably, not changed their positions on non-participation in the Committee's work. They were therefore still unable to participate in the Committee's work.

10. In view of the complexities and difficulties in implementing the Declaration, and since its objectives remained unchanged, the Committee might consider recommending to the General Assembly that more time should be given for consultations before practical measures for ensuring regional peace and stability in accordance with the Declaration were discussed.

11. **Mr. Thamrin** (Indonesia) said that his delegation welcomed the Committee's efforts to promote a mutually beneficial dialogue to ensure that the Indian Ocean was transformed into a region of peace, security and stability. However, building peace, security and stability in the Indian Ocean required confidence-building measures coupled with a focus on non-military aspects of security and cooperation with regard to naval issues. In that context, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations had recently issued a joint declaration emphasizing the importance of a comprehensive approach to promoting peace and security in the zone.

12. It was regrettable that progress towards the achievement of the all-important goal of promoting peace and security had been hindered by, inter alia, the non-participation of several permanent members of the Security Council in the Committee's work and their insistence on naval autonomy and unilateralism. The major sea lanes that were vital to international trade, and the activities flowing from a variety of regional and extraregional factors made the need for peace and security in the Indian Ocean all the more self-evident.

13. His delegation believed that, with the proper political will, divergent interests in the region could be reconciled. He supported the Chairman's recommendation that the General Assembly should

give the Chairman more time to continue his consultations.

14. **Mr. Stephens** (Australia) said that prospects of the Committee undertaking substantive work in the near future remained limited. However, as a littoral State, Australia was committed to the strengthening of regional cooperation and to United Nations efforts to enhance security in the Indian Ocean region. He hoped that in time conditions and positions would change to enable the Committee to undertake substantive work.

15. **Mr. Durrani** (Pakistan) said that the current situation in the world made it imperative that the Committee's work aimed at making the Indian Ocean a zone of peace should be strengthened. In that regard, he supported the Chairman's initiative and all endeavours designed to create a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean.

Adoption of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session (A/AC.159/L.134)

16. **Mr. Randrianarivony** (Madagascar), Rapporteur, introducing the draft report of the Committee (A/AC.159/L.134), said that part I of the report contained elements derived from the mandate of the Committee pursuant to General Assembly resolution 56/16. Part II dealt with both organizational and substantive matters, including the report of the Chairman pursuant to paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 56/16 and the adoption of the Committee's report to the fifty-eighth session of the Assembly. In the second line of paragraph 13 of the draft report, the word "draft" should be inserted before the word "resolution".

17. **The Chairman** suggested that the Committee should adopt the report paragraph by paragraph.

18. *It was so decided.*

Paragraphs 1 to 5

19. *Paragraphs 1 to 5 were adopted.*

Paragraph 6

20. *Paragraph 6 was adopted.*

Paragraphs 7 to 10

21. *Paragraphs 7 to 10 were adopted.*

Paragraph 11

22. *Paragraph 11 was adopted.*

Paragraph 12

23. *Paragraph 12 was adopted.*

Paragraph 13

24. *Paragraph 13, as orally amended, was adopted.*

Paragraph 14

25. *Paragraph 14 was adopted.*

26. *The draft report, as orally amended, was adopted.*

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.